--- 25 Cigarettes - “Imperial Tobacco” [**6-10D**] - 1951-55 ---

With the April 10th 1951 Budget, the cigarette *excise tax* (no longer printed on the stamp) increased from $ 4.00 to $ 5.50 per thousand small cigarettes and “Imperial Tobacco”, discontinuing their *lettered cancellations*, adopted a three digit code system for their cigarette production. Beginning in June 1951 these numbered date codes start at **124** (24th week of 1951?). According to an old collection purchased on auction many years ago the number sequences [**129-130**] and [**134-138**] were not used due to a plant strike, which (Chris Ryan reports) began on August 14th and ended on September 24th. I would think that the numbers **129** and **130** were omitted due to labour unrest prior to the actual plant strike. These old collections also state that the numbers following **144** were not used because the plant was shut-down after the strike. During the 5½ week strike five numbers were missed by the striking staff [**134** to **138**] thus it seems that the code numbers were being changed *weekly*. This is pure *speculation* on my part, based solely on the existent cancellations, and on those cancellations missed during the strike - a lack which indicates that the numbers were date oriented by some period of time.

Still, after the plant was re-opened, the series for 1952 began in January with **201**. This series was probably intended to stop at **252**, however the series was sequentially extended into 1953.

The *problem encountered* is that using a weekly three digit code, starting in January 1952, the date sequence ends up a full year short of my reverse calculated date of June 1956 for the introduction of the initial two digit code **I I**. To make the date sequence fit the actual timetable nit seems to me that for a period after **233** (when Imperial was using the large 6 mm date number **234** the code numbering reads bi-monthly until reaching the 4 mm **271** where weekly coding resumes. I know that this is an arbitrary assumption on my part, but nothing else fits with the yearly period of three digit date coding, and the **RQ-22** and **RP-1788** “Imperial” date codes on the next page.

Initially the cancellation was in black ink applied vertically reading down in a 4½ mm. Gothic number on the right, plus a 4 mm. Gothic company code [**6-10D**] reading vertically down on the left. Many of the stamps are in unused condition and were apparently taken from the production line by a philatelist, with a few dated on the reverse side in pencil (possibly by the Customs Collector) when he released the batch of stamps. (e.g. **219** is back-dated May 9th 1952 - in the 19th week of 1952?).

With **231** the company code was dropped from the cancellation, and at **234** the Gothic type face is increased to 6 mm. and the number code (now changing *bi-monthly*) still applied vertically reading down, is doubled. The usage fold, running vertically down the center, separates the numbers and the obvious purpose of the doubling was to show the date code both from the top and from the front of the finished carton, since the stamp was applied over the top and down the front face.

The Budget of April 8th 1952 reduced the excise tax on *small* cigarettes from $5.50 to $4.00 per thousand with the price per pack of twenty reverting to 35¢, and the Budget of February 19th 1953 reduced the excise duty on *small cigarettes* from $6.00 to $4.00 per thousand, probably dropping the twenty cigarette pack to 30¢, and thus the changes in the coding figure size is probably related production under these decreases.

There followed, in June 1956, a two-digit cancellation series, reading in *months*, beginning with plain stick **I** ’s at **I I** and running to **99**, (99 - 11 = 89 months, or 89 ÷ 12 = 7 years and 5 months, until December 1962). The two digit series recommenced at **11** (serifed and footed) and ran to about **70** where the “Wings” Series was introduced, (70 - 11 = 60 months, or 60 ÷ 12 = 5 years, in December 1967).

The “Wings” Series ran through to **95**, and began again at **11**. Upon reaching **23** the company code was reversed, and the series ran out to **58** when the use of government issued stamps ceased in August 1974, (99 - 70 = 30) + (58 - 11 = 48) or 78 months, equals 78 ÷ 12 = 6 years and 6 months, ending in August 1974).

[from Chris Ryan - ex the “Canada, Labour Gazette”, 1951, Vol. 51, p. 1609]

“The Imperial Tobacco strike, affecting four factories and 3690 workers, commenced on August 14th 1951, and ended on September 24th 1951”.

[also from Chris Ryan, by e-mail, on June 25th 2006]

Budgets were tabled: October 20th 1949; March 28th 1950; September 7th 1950; April 10th 1951; April 8th 1952; February 19th 1953; and April 6th 1954

Extracted from “BNA Topics”, May 1955, Vol. 12, No. 5, page 150 - R. Del French “Revenue Group News”

“There are some new tobacco stamps. ... The other new stamp is 1/2 pound for use on tins of smoking tobacco. It is 61 x 21 mm., black, and either rouletted or imperforate. ... The roulette stamps were issued on January 24, 1955, and the imperforate ones three days later, on the 27th. While this may be the first stamp of a new series, the Department is not presently contemplating the issue of other denominations.”

RQ-22 - 1/2 pound, *fine roulette*, with 4 mm. control # **3015988**,
coded **321 / 1-13D** by B. Houde & Grothe, Quebec City

This fine roulette 1/2 pound manufactured tobacco stamp was released on January 24th 1955. The control number on the above stamp is already at the **300,000** mark, and the cancellation is **321**. One could presume that the date of use for the above stamp was at least mid-1955.

On January 3rd 1955 a labour dispute resulted in a strike at BABN which lasted until January 14th 1955. During the strike, on January 13th 1955, since their supply of the 1/8th pound strip **RP-1785** was exhausted, it became necessary for the administrative staff to produce the overprint **RP-1788** - **1/8** on 2/21st pounds.

The BABN supervisory staff overprinted obsolete *control-free* sheets of the imperforate 2/21st pound **RP-1775** in dark blue ink with a central 6 mm. Roman **1/8**, plus three 13 x 1½ mm. horizontally stacked dark blue *killer bars* at the ends as the BABN provisional overprint **RP-1788**. The control numbering had been pre-applied in the 1/8th pound sequence.

Thus it seems that the code **312** comes from February 1955, and the code **321** comes from about mid-1955. Neither of these properly fits into a weekly change of code beginning with **201** in January 1952. There must be some other explanation. Did the numbers change every ten days?

--- 25 Cigarettes - as used by “Imperial Tobacco” - 1951-55 ---

--- on this page - 78 copies to date ---

According to an old collection purchased on auction many years ago the code numbers **129-130** and **134-138** were not used due to a plant strike. Chris Ryan reports that the ‘Imperial Tobacco’ strike began on August 14th, and ended on September 24th. The strike would cover the five weeks **134-138**, and the numbers **145** to **200** were not used during a post-strike plant shut-down. I would guess that **129-130** were omitted during pre-strike labour agitation. It would seem that **123** represented the 23rd week of 1951, and that these early code numbers read the week of the year.

[★RC-394]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1951	---	---	---	---	---	124	128	132	---	140	144	---
	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	---	---	---	---	---	126	---	---	---	142	---	---
	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	139	---	---	---

201 to **230**

231 to 234

235 to 263

264 to **353**

[C-378]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1952	201	205	---	---	217	---	---	---	233	236	---	240
	---	206	210	---	218	222	226	---	---	237	---	241
	203	207	211	---	219	---	---	231	235			
	---	208	---	---	---	---	228	232				
1953	242	244	246	---	---	252	254	256	258	---	262	264
	---	---	247	249	---	253	255	---	259	261	263	265
1954	266	268	270	---	276	280	284	288	---	296	300	304
	267	---	271	273	277	281	---	289	293	---	301	305
				274	278	282	---	290	---	298	302	---
				275	279	283	287	---	295	---	---	307

--- on this page - 61 copies to date ---

354 to **364**

365 to **381**

382 and **383**

[★RC-394]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1955	**308**	**---**	**316**	**320**	**324**	**328**	**332**	**---**	**340**	**344**	**348**	**352**
	309	**313**	**317**	**321**	**325**	**329**	**333**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**353**
	310	**314**	**318**	**322**	**326**	**330**	**334**	**---**	**342**	**346**	**350**	**354**
	311	**315**	**319**	**---**	**327**	**331**	**335**	**339**	**---**	**347**	**351**	**355**
1956	**356**	**360**	**364**	**368**	**372**	**---**	**380**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**
	357	**---**	**365**	**369**	**373**	**377**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**
	358	**362**	**366**	**370**	**374**	**---**	**382**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**
	359	**363**	**367**	**371**	**375**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**

From the previously quoted May 1955 article in “BNA Topics”, it seems that the code **312** must come from February 1955, and the code **321** must come from about mid-1955.

[from Chris Ryan, by e-mail, on June 25th 2006]

Budgets were tabled: October 20th 1949; March 28th 1950; September 7th 1950; April 10th 1951; April 8th 1952; February 19th 1953; and April 6th 1954

--- 25 Cigarettes - Series “C” - as used by “Imperial Tobacco” - 1956-64 ---

--- using parallel Gothic numbers - reading vertically down at the top ---

The Federal Budget was tabled on **March 20th, 1956**. The ‘plain-stick’ coding begins at **I I** in June 1956.

★**RC-394** - 25 cigarettes, imperf, coded **I I / 6–10D** by “Imperial Tobacco” in August 1964

--- with [6–10D] reading horizontally across the bottom - 98 copies to date ---

[★RC-394]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1956	--	--	--	--	--	I I	I 2	--	I 5	I 6	I 7	I 8
1957	I 9	20	2 I	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1958	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
1959	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
1960	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66
1961	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78
1962	79	80	81	--	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
1963	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	11	12	14
1964	15	16	17	18	19	--	21	--	--	--	--	--

plus **I C** **2C** **3C** **4C** **5C**

Initially using a “plain-stick” figure **I**, which carries over from the preceding three digit sequence until achieving **3 I**, this number sequence runs through to **99**, and begins anew at **11** (using a figure **1** - with serif and foot), and then merges into the subsequent sequence (with the company code reading vertically down at the lower right) at about **23**. These sequences always seem to omit **10** and **13**.

The collection contains five example of what have been termed ‘Christmas Packs’ by some of the old collectors. The first pair **I C** and **2 C** are in the darker black shade, while the last three **3 C**, **4 C** and **5 C** are in the lighter grey shade found in the later printings.

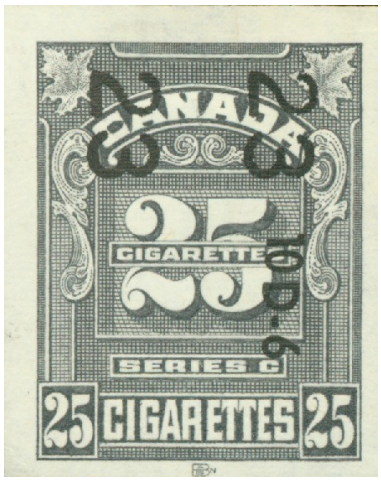
These cancellations mainly occur on the twenty-five cigarette stamps, although have seen a few on twenty cigarette copies. One would hardly think that the company would have supplied a couple of packs as a Christmas gift, and it is more probable that ‘Christmas Cartons’ were prepared.

It would seem that the numbers represent the Christmas of 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955. With **5 C** and 1955, the sequence seems to end. Probably the employees (having struck on January 3rd 1955) wanted more than cigarettes for Christmas, and the company discontinued any future “Christmas Gift Packs”.

--- 25 Cigarettes - Series “C” - as used by “Imperial Tobacco” - 1964-68 ---

--- using parallel Gothic numbers - reading vertically down at the top ---

The Federal Budget was tabled on **March 16th, 1964**. The change from **6-10D** to **10D-6** occurs in August 1964.



★**RC-394** - 25 cigarettes, imperf, coded **22 / 6-10D** by “Imperial Tobacco” in August 1964

★**RC-394** - 25 cigarettes, imperf, coded **23 / 10D-6** by “Imperial Tobacco” in September 1964

--- with [10D-6] reading *vertically down* at the lower right side - 16 copies to date ---

[★RC-394]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1964	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	22	23	24	--	--
1965	27	28	29	--	--	--	33	34	35	--	37	--
1966	--	--	--	--	--	44	--	--	47	--	49	--
1967	51	--	53	--	--	--	--	58	--	--	--	--
1968	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	71	--	--	--

The Federal Budget was tabled on **October 22nd, 1968**. The “Wings” Series has already begun.

44 is in poor condition and should be replaced when available.

This sequence begins and intermeshes with the preceding sequence at about **22** in April 1964 and the “Wings” Series is eventually introduced at about **71** in May 1968. These points of interchange may slightly vary, since the date of final usage of a particular denomination may differ from the norm.

--- 25 Cigarettes - “Wings” Series - “Imperial Tobacco” - 1968-74 ---

--- using parallel Gothic numbers - reading vertically down at the top ---

The previous number series runs into and meshes with this sequence at about **70**. The “Wings” Series was introduced in August 1968. The Federal Budget was tabled on **October 22nd, 1968**. The “Wings” Series has already begun.

★**RC-817** - 25 cigarettes, “Wings” series, imperf, coded **58 / 10D-6** by “Imperial Tobacco” in August 1974

--- with [10D-6] reading *vertically down* at the lower right side - 7 copies to date ---

[★RC-817]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1968	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1969	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1970	--	**88**	--	--	**91**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1971	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	**24**	--	--
1972	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	**35**	--	--	--
1973	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1974	--	--	--	--	**55**	**56**	--	**58**				

This final number sequence seems to omit **96-99**, and ends at **58** in August 1974. All of these “Imperial” sequences seem to omit **10** and **13**. It appears that the Imperial Tobacco cigarette production in Ontario was shifting to [1-17E] at Guelph, and a lot of their Quebec production was being sent to [1-13D] at Quebec City.

File path is [c:\ MS - STAMPS \ RC_STAMPS \ 1935 - Series C \ 25 cigarettes \ 6-10D - small - black digits],
In MS Word 2007 for Windows 7,
Formatted for a HP CP 1525 Laser Jet,
December 30th 2013, JBH